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ABSTRACT

In 1972, a Student Advisory Board (composed of high school students) was created in Pennsylvania. Students proposed projects in areas that concerned them, formed small committees, and through interviews with relevant or influential people, fact-finding, and assessment of available material and responses, prepared reports and recommendations. It is hoped that some of these reports will be disseminated among all students. This paper contains the student reports on the 1974-1975 projects and deals with college testing, communications, competency-based education programs, school climate, student participation, and teacher observation/evaluation. (NG)

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# STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD

## 1974-1975

Pennsylvania Department of Education

CG 010 216

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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# STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD

## 1974-1975

Pennsylvania Department of Education

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Department of Education
John C. Pittenger, *Secretary*

Office of Basic Education
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## Student Advisory Board

The Student Advisory Board was established by Secretary of Education John C. Pittenger in the summer of 1972 to provide high school students from across Pennsylvania an opportunity to review issues of major concern at the state level and to recommend new ways of dealing with the issues. Board members understand from the outset, however, that they are advisory, and there is no guarantee the Secretary will agree with their opinions or implement their recommendations.

Members of the board are selected by their fellow students in each of the Commonwealth's 29 intermediate units, where student forums are established to allow representatives from all senior high schools to explore issues of local concern.

The 1974-75 Student Advisory Board met six times during the year in Harrisburg to study six topics of their choice: communications, college testing, competency-based education programs, school climate, student participation and teacher observation/evaluation. The students, working in small groups with the advice of Pennsylvania Department of Education staff members, compiled the reports in this document.

Copies of this report are sent to all superintendents, secondary school principals, intermediate unit executive directors, intermediate unit student forum advisers and members of the State Board of Education and the Student Advisory Board, as well as to Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators, Pennsylvania Association of Secondary School Principals, Pennsylvania State Education Association, Pennsylvania Federation of Teachers, Pennsylvania School Boards Association, Pennsylvania Association of Student Councils, Pennsylvania Youth Education Association, Pennsylvania Congress of Parents and Teachers and the media. Additional copies are available through the PDE Office of Information and Publications, Box 911, Harrisburg 17126. Questions about the Student Advisory Board and its operation should be directed to Leann Miller, Bureau of Planning and Evaluation, (717) 787-3976.

## College Testing

The original purpose of the college testing committee was to examine the function and relevancy of admissions tests, such as the SAT, PSAT, Achievement Test and CLEP exam, and to discover what role these tests played in college admissions and why test costs were so high. We also set out to find an avenue of communication through which we could make recommendations in areas we found open to change.

Little did we realize the scope of the admissions testing program or the amount of information to which we would later have access.

At our third meeting, the committee met with a representative from the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB), who gave us a history of admissions tests and answered our questions as to the structure, purpose and makeup of the tests.

In further meetings our committee established correspondence with administrators from the Educational Testing Service (ETS), who provided us considerable information. We also interviewed two Pennsylvania college admissions representatives, who told us of the role that the various tests play in admissions procedures.

Through surveys and questionnaires we asked students, teachers and guidance counselors across the state for their opinions and recommendations on admissions tests. We discovered many statewide concerns, such as why costs are so high, why admissions tests are necessary and what skills these tests measure.

We also received many suggested changes for the tests, including moving the 8 a.m. starting time (for SATs) back, having the testing company provide the student a written evaluation of strengths and weaknesses and having the CEEB offer a more comprehensive statement of purpose for the various tests.

We submitted our recommendations to the ETS, which responded by saying that many of the areas we questioned were already being studied. ETS answered our questions, and though we were not always satisfied, we realized we had reached the last outlet for appeal.

As a committee we were not satisfied that having our questions answered was enough or that we had done all we could. We felt it would be in the best interest of the students of Pennsylvania if we shared some of our findings. We took the most commonly asked questions, answered them as best we could and compiled them in a booklet, "Everything You Always Wanted to Know about SATs--But Didn't Know Where to Ask."

Recommendation: We recommend that Secretary Pittenger submit this booklet to the PDE staff for statewide distribution.

It is hoped that four copies of the new booklet could be sent to every school in the Commonwealth (public and private), two for each guidance department and two for the head of student government in each school.

Through this method of distribution we hope to give every Pennsylvania student access to our booklet which, we feel, will make his or her encounter with the admissions testing program easier to understand.

## Communications

The communications committee chose, as its project, a rewriting of the regulations and guidelines on student rights and responsibilities. Its intent was to produce a publication that is more readable and understandable than the one now serving as a guide for school administrators. Our finished product will hopefully offer students a clearer understanding of what student rights and responsibilities mean to them.

We discussed an assessment of the need for a student resource center to serve as a link between Pennsylvania students and the Student Advisory Board. But, because of a general feeling that many students did not know of the existence of the Student Advisory Board and forums, we decided to take on general public relations functions.

Our first project was the preparation and distribution of two news releases concerning the activities of the Student Advisory Board and student forums. One release was intended for school media and the other for local newspapers and radio stations.

Each Student Advisory Board member was sent a press kit containing the two releases, plus instructions on having them duplicated by the forums and distributed to local media and schools. The media release was also distributed through the department's Office of Information and Publications. In addition, a story on the Student Advisory Board and forums was featured on the front page of Pennsylvania Education, the department's bi-weekly tabloid.

Upon completion of this project we decided to focus on the rewriting of the regulations and guidelines on student rights and responsibilities. Our efforts began with the committee and advisers going over the present document point by point to determine which items were rights, which were responsibilities and which were up to the discretion of the school districts.

Between meetings we each rewrote an assigned section of the document, using an outline prepared by our advisers. We then submitted them to the advisers for review.

Each section was reviewed by the full committee at a following meeting and suggestions from that review were incorporated into a final draft, which has also been submitted to the advisers. Since the advisers and guidance and legal staffs from the department will revise our work for journalistic style and legal correctness, what we have submitted will have undergone numerous changes before it is ready for printing.

During the next few months our advisers will determine how much money is available for publication and explore the various forms

the publication might take. A professional artist from the Office of Information and Publications will do the illustrations.

Our committee was not involved in research; so, unlike most of the other committees, we have no policy recommendation to offer. However, we do request that the department provide funding for whatever form of publication our advisers find most feasible. We recommend the continuation of the communication committee in next year's Student Advisory Board and that it be free to pursue its own objectives.

## Competency-Based Education Programs

### I. Introduction

The traditional education system which qualifies students for graduation is based on the progression of the student through predetermined units of time and divisions of knowledge--an excellent model in theory and structure. Yet, this program often falls short of its final goals, as evidenced by high dropout rates, student vandalism and lack of community interest. Today's society calls for a level of mastery of specialized skills by the student; it is difficult to attain this with traditional approaches to education.

While present education outlines the material to be mastered, it does not have the means to assure that the material has been successfully mastered. We, therefore, assert that the curriculum must be adapted to quality students for graduation on the basis of their ability to demonstrate competence in those facts, concepts and skills outlined in this report.

### II. Rationale

For too long the burden of education has been solely the school's responsibility. There is no provision in the current school laws of Pennsylvania that requires a student to demonstrate mastery of a given skill. It is time that responsibility is transferred to the student.

This idea is by no means unique. The Citizens Commission on Basic Education for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the departments of education for the states of Pennsylvania, Oregon, California, Hawaii and New York, as well as groups such as the Clearing House for Applied Testing, have been exploring the possibility of redefining educational goals in terms of competency.

### III. Suggested Competencies

One objective of the competency-based education programs committee has been to develop a list of minimum skills that students should be able to demonstrate before leaving secondary school. These are not to be thought of as maximums and in no way are they intended as absolute final products. They are intended to be minimum final competencies.

Competency skills--the minimum level of education needed to function in society.

| Suggested Competencies | Proposed Learning Experiences | Proposed Methods of Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Ability to read at no lower than the 6th grade level. | Basic reading instruction. Classroom use of newspaper and printed forms. | Periodic use of written comprehension tests. |
| 2. Ability to use math skills to handle budgets, checking accounts, credit and wise purchasing. | Basic math instruction. Use of practical projects, simulations. | Paper and pencil computation tests, problem-solving. |
| 3. Ability to gather and analyze information (in response to practical and theoretical problems) and make informal decisions from that material. | Information gathering in a variety of courses to meet a wide range of problems (i.e., health, music, social studies). | Simulation project designed by student in consultation with teacher. |
| 4. Knowledge of human growth and development; care of children; responsibility and attitudes of successful parenthood. | Field experience with young children, classroom study, discussions with family living specialists. | Simulation problem tests and practical skill tests in infant care. |
| 5. Health and physical fitness, including (a) skill beyond the introductory stage in at least one team sport; (b) skill beyond the introductory stage in at least one lifetime sport; (c) swim well enough to save at least oneself. | Health and physical fitness courses, intramural and interscholastic activities and community recreation. | Actual performance test. |
| 6. Minimum technological literacy to complete minimum auto repair, use of simple hand and power tools, cooking and nutrition. | Classroom instruction with out-of-school experience. | Actual performance test. |
| 7. Development of at least one marketable skill. | Study of occupations, field experiences, on-the-job training, vocational training. | Test of student's progress for job placement. |
| 8. Skill beyond the introductory stage in at least one art. | Studio experience in any variety of arts, including music, painting, graphics, etc. | Portfolio performance. |

| Suggested Competencies | Proposed Learning Experiences | Proposed Methods of Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| 9. Ability to explain one's opinions. | Classroom study information of values and norms, independent study. | Actual performance. |
| 10. Ability to speak before a group. | Classroom experience in extemporaneous and planned speaking. | Evaluation of minimum skills. |
| 11. Ability to work with a group on a common task. | Classroom experience in cooperative work. | Evaluation of actual behavior over a period of time. |
| 12. Ability to demonstrate relative skills which exemplify tolerance for frustration, respect for others, positive self-image, self-discipline. | The building of faculty and parental models which exemplify these traits, specific classroom training in interpersonal skills. | Evaluation of actual behavior over a period of time. |
| 13. Understanding the modern world in terms of historic, social and natural forces which have shaped it. | Studies in history, social sciences, environmental studies and drawing parallels. | Testing of minimal factual and skill-related information. |
| 14. Understanding the operation of the social and political system in order to bring about desirable change. | Combination of classroom and field study. | Simulation and/or demonstration in real setting in school or community affairs. |

IV. Implementation

Cost considerations: Competency-based education would not be implemented without additional costs. The short-term expenditure represents a definition of specific goals, transition programs and in-service instruction. (Spady's estimate for a six-year transition program, starting in 1974 for Oregon, was $3.682 million.) In Pennsylvania parts of the groundwork and resource assessment are already completed. Competency-based education is moving ahead and transition is not likely to become cheaper as time passes. As with every new program, certain costs appear during the adjustment stage. Prudent management will go far in minimizing fiscal strains.

Furthermore, the long-term costs of competency-based education may actually be lower than those of its traditional counterpart. This program requires full use of the resources

a school possesses. By allowing the student to learn in the community, the school is able to provide resources that would be both costly and difficult to duplicate within its walls. Implied are individualized instruction and a low teacher/student ratio. Proper management will require that teachers be used more effectively.

A highly verbal instructional system will be supplanted by one in which the teacher is an instructional coordinator offering not only his/her talents but also directing peer teaching, independent study, use of audio-visual aids, etc. Furthermore, the competency-based approach means that a school building need not be the instructional site. Similarly, the learning process need not be restricted to the academic year; for example, a student may learn to swim over summer vacation and will only need to be evaluated upon returning to school. This would result in considerable savings in time and facilities for the school.

Teacher qualifications: The present educational system requires that a teacher earn a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher education. It also requires that during the first three years of teaching, the teacher must take additional courses equivalent to 24 credits in order to obtain permanent certification.

To implement competency-based education, other requirements will be necessary to insure teacher competency in the system. The teacher's awareness of the community in which he or she teaches is most important. Often the teacher may find that his/her knowledge is limited and other resources may be substituted. These resources may include businesses, institutions and individuals in the community.

This program also demands considerable experience by the instructors in handling youth under this unique situation. This means that student teaching be done prior to, as well as during, the instructor's senior year in college. Frequent enrichment courses may be needed to enhance the instructor's presentation of material. Since the teaching of subject material often changes, the teacher must be flexible enough to meet these changes. In addition to extra courses, a frequent check of the teacher's abilities must be included in the program. As mentioned previously, special training of teachers will be required from the start if this unique learning experience is to be effective.

Compulsory attendance: Existing compulsory attendance laws regarding pupil exit requirements state that students need only have reached the age of 17. With competency-based education,

the question arises as to how long may a student be required to attend a secondary educational institution before he/she is required to leave. We recognize that there will be certain unique problems involved in the new system that we are suggesting.

Theoretically, a student could graduate at 14 years of age. However, we are not suggesting that schools graduate these students at that age. We merely want to emphasize the mastery of those minimum competencies and their relationship with the overall education of an individual. These are by no means the only instructional practices to be made available in the school system. The schools should also offer traditional courses so that students may explore to their fullest potential all the facets of learning that they are capable of exploring.

We also realize that there will be those students who for some reason cannot reach the necessary requirements needed to graduate. In this case the student will be encouraged to leave the system when his/her highest potential has been reached, or at age 18. Looking at some of the previously mentioned unique features that will be created by this system, we can see where a student who has "competencied out" at 14 may wish to return to the educational system at a later date. Under this system, this would be permissible until the age of 21, after which the student forfeits his/her right to a free public education.

Relation to higher education: Today's society requires, for the most part, a student who is adequately prepared for further education either in a college or specialized school. The competency-based system readily fulfills these needs. Questions arise as to how colleges can adjust to the transition to this educational program. This need not be difficult.

This system does not recommend complete readjustment of the curriculum. We intend that basic goals are to be initiated to provide minimums, not maximums. In no way are they intended as absolute, final products; they are set as minimal cognitive competencies. With this in mind, colleges need not fear the competency-based student as undereducated, but welcome him/her as having successfully demonstrated basic competencies which will be the stepping stones for further advance work.

It must be made clear that not all competencies can be effectively tested. Yet, tests can be easily prepared for the natural and applied sciences. With this thought, the student will master ideas necessary to complete further work. Attending class for a designated amount of time does not insure that the student has sufficient mastery of the subject to move to more complex material.

V. Other Effects in Classroom Environment

Educational reformers have been suggesting that competitive forces in the school be rechanneled. Competency-based education may aid such an effort. The evaluation of minimum competencies implies a pass/fail system in certain nonpreparatory courses--a student either achieves the mastery of the skill or does not. Evaluation of this type also enhances a shifting of competitive priorities, because the student challenges himself/herself rather than competing with others all of the time. This will help rid us of what Campbell describes as "a system based on mistrust."[1] Learning will take place without threat of grades, failure and being less than first.

VI. Recommendation

We recommend that Secretary Pittenger propose to the State Board of Education that a resolution be adopted for the implementation of Section 3, maintaining the framework established in this report.

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[1] Campbell, David N. On Being Number One: Competition in Education. Phi Delta Kappa, October 1974, p. 143.

## School Climate

### Introduction

"Quality education should help every child acquire a positive attitude toward the learning process." This is the fourth goal of the Ten Goals of Quality Education adopted by the Pennsylvania State Board of Education.

Members of the school climate committee recognized after investigation that there are many situations which affect the climate of a school. Committee members distributed surveys to students throughout the Commonwealth to find out how a school climate can be improved. Committee members also obtained information pertaining to Goal IV of Quality Education which had been previously evaluated by the Department of Education. Many undesirable conditions in guidance programs in various school districts were recognized by the committee, which has compiled its findings in hopes that the following suggestions are given serious consideration by students, faculty, guidance counselors and administrators and that action is taken to transform lack of interest (apathy) into a climate in which all have a positive attitude toward education:

I. Survey Results

A. Question 1: Do curriculum, activity and sports offerings in your school satisfy the interests of most students in and out of school?

The interests of students are directly influenced by the quality of curriculum, activity and sports programs provided by the school. Because these are basic areas of student involvement, attitudes about the learning process are formed through proper application of these programs. Many students responded to question #1 affirmatively, stating that their schools fulfilled the varied interests of students. Other students, however, suggested the following ideas for improvement:

1. Sports programs, particularly for girls, require more selections and better facilities and equipment.

2. Curriculum should be improved by requiring fewer courses and offering a greater selection of electives.

3. Activities and clubs require selections which reach many diverse student interests in a well-organized program.

4. Faculty and administration interest in curriculum, activities and sports directly affect student attitudes.

Sports programs' numbers and effectiveness depend on students' interest in specific sports. Boys and girls should be offered equal numbers of sports programs. Depending upon the school's capacity to provide facilities and equipment and the number of students involved, the school should consider sports programs important in creating unity and spirit for students.

Curriculum may be expanded through the use of mini-courses or courses concentrating on specific areas of basic subjects. Specialized programs involving practical skills, such as business or vocational-technical programs, should be further developed and encouraged. In addition to strictly academic subjects, curriculum should develop basic skills with which students need to cope to be successful in life. By loosening demands on required courses and offering many electives, students have the opportunity to choose courses in which they are truly interested.

Activities and clubs should include the interests of many diverse school groups. If students show great interest in forming a club in a new area, permission should be granted to form such a group. Also, activities involving the entire student body, such as assemblies, pep rallies and dances, should be encouraged to provide unity in the school.

Faculty and administration should demonstrate positive interest in the areas of curriculum, activity and sports programs. Teacher attitudes directly influence student attitudes, so staff involvement in school activities and student affairs promotes student interest. With updated teaching methods, teachers can gain the respect and participation of students. The improved communication among students, faculty and administration is essential in creating a positive school climate.

B. Question 2: What rules and regulations does your school impose that you feel are unnecessary?

To create a school climate conducive to learning, administrators and faculty should be aware of the rules and regulations that students feel are hampering the educational process. Through our surveys students showed they desire the opportunity to demonstrate responsibility through new or revised programs. Students feel that some of the following areas of traditional rules and regulations constrict the school atmosphere:

1. Prohibition of smoking in the school area.
2. Use of passes within the school.
3. Lack of freedom within the classroom.

4. Discipline rules in the school.
5. Inflexibility of attendance requirements in and out of school.

Prohibition of smoking in the school area - The majority of students surveyed feel that specific areas within the school property should be designated as smoking areas.

Use of passes within school - In most schools students must carry in the halls a transfer showing where they are going, where they come from and what time they left from the area. Also, students must have a bus pass, and once this pass is obtained, it is good for only one bus. We feel that the use of passes should be abolished to give students a chance to practice responsibility.

Lack of freedom within the classroom - Students are assigned seats in the classroom, study hall, auditorium, homeroom and cafeteria. Under these circumstances we feel that a school's atmosphere is depressed. Perhaps a less structured classroom would promote a better atmosphere in the entire school.

Discipline rules in the school - Detentions, suspensions and corporal punishment are often applied under unjust circumstances. Often detentions are given for such minor offenses as being minutes late for school and class.

C. Question 3: Are students, faculty and administration able to understand one another easily? If yes, how is it accomplished? If no, how can it be improved?

Major concerns:

1. Respect in some areas among students and administration seems lacking.

2. Personal contact between students and administration is minimal in many areas.

3. Too many questions go unanswered by faculty and administration.

4. Lack of communication because of lack of time results in poor attitude of students and faculty.

Suggestions:

Respect between the students and administration is a major goal of communication in the school. The students feel that each

side must respect and be aware of school administrative functions and student functions. A suggestion to help develop student-faculty relations is to form a personal contact committee of students and teachers: This committee could discuss problems or school rules and try to improve or promote them. Another suggestion is to ask the principal and/or assistant principal to make themselves available to the students and to classrooms or assemblies to answer any students' questions and to explain some rules that aren't clear to students. We feel that this procedure would help to promote better student-faculty relations. Communicating is determined by one major factor--TIME. Teachers and guidance counselors should try to show a definite interest in all their students. By making themselves available to their students, they can help solve some of the problems students have. Helping one another in the school could help to develop more interest on the part of the students and administration, thus improving the last major concern of the students--ATTITUDE.

D. Question 4: What is a major cause of the lack of interest in your school?

Major concerns:

1. Seeming lack of attention on the part of the teachers and administration about matters relating to students.
2. Not enough varied programs that interest the students.
3. Lack of freedom (general).
4. Lack of communication on the part of teachers.
5. Poor food.

Concern not only starts with students but with teachers and administrators. Promoting teacher involvement is very important to the students. Again, we strongly suggest that teachers, guidance counselors and administrators try to show an interest in their students. Another of the major problems that the students feel help cause a major lack of interest is variety in their school programs. A more varied curriculum gives the students more freedom to explore areas that already interest them. Students we surveyed felt this would help rid schools of lack of interest. Communication between students and administrators, again, is also very important.

II. Guidance Counseling

In developing a favorable climate in which the student can learn, we must take into account the guidance program. During

the past four or five years the guidance counseling department has been undergoing a state of transition. With the school now saddled with financial limitations, it has put the job of the counselor in question, not to say jeopardy. The philosophical fantasies, like personal and social counseling, educational and occupational planning along with careful handling of student needs, are slowly falling by the wayside. The questions are: "What is the future of the guidance counselor?" "What role should the counselor play in the function of the school?"

Recommendation:

The State Board of Education should state what the proper role of the guidance counselor should be in education. In doing this, we also suggest, the board should leave considerable flexibility in defining guidance counseling so that counselors are not locked into a set program, but instead draw up the "road map" so that the guidance program can chart its course.

The regulations of the State Board of Education, Chapter 17 of December 1, 1967, start to outline the elements of a guidance program but do not touch all bases. The regulations were good but only started to put the right foot forward. There are many more steps to be taken. So a further definition and extension of the outline would indeed help stabilize the guidance program.

Guidance counseling plays a big part in the functioning of a school system. In most cases the counseling department shoulders the responsibility of student records, scheduling and problem-solving. If this department were to be eliminated, it would hinder or even stall the educational process. Why, then, is it that this very important part of the school is not even mandated by the State Board? It has been mandated that all districts employ one or more school nurses and at least one full-time librarian, but there is no mention of employing full-time guidance counselors:

Recommendation:

The State Board of Education should mandate that for every 400 students enrolled in the secondary school a certified guidance counselor be employed by each school district or jointly with a nearby school district.

## Student Participation

We feel that Pennsylvania's students need greater communications with their administrators and increased participation in educational decision-making. The lack of participation can breed frustration, which in turn leads to apathy, discipline problems, vandalism, absenteeism and general school unrest. Increased participation should foster greater responsibility, thus helping to eliminate frustrations, creating a healthy school environment. We feel that greater student participation would enhance the realization of at least seven of the Ten Goals of Quality Education. They are:

Goal I. Quality education should help every child acquire the greatest possible understanding of self and an appreciation of worthiness as a member of society.

Goal II. Quality education should help every child acquire understanding and appreciation of persons belonging to social, cultural and ethnic groups different from his/her own.

Goal IV. Quality education should help every child acquire a positive attitude toward the learning process.

Goal V. Quality education should help every child acquire the habits and attitudes associated with responsible citizenship.

Goal VII. Quality education should give every child opportunity and encouragement to be creative in one or more fields of endeavor.

Goal VIII. Quality education should help every child understand the opportunities open for preparation for a productive life and should enable him/her to take full advantage of these opportunities.

Goal X. Quality education should help every child to prepare for a world of rapid change and unforeseeable demands in which continuing education throughout adult life should be a normal expectation.

It is from these comprehensive educational goals that specific learning outcomes should be derived. Therefore, two important points about the 10 goals should be noted.

The first is that the goals stress the need for cooperative relationships between teachers and students; the helping, advisory quality of teaching; and the self-initiating quality of learning.

> The second point is that the goals address both the needs of a democratic society and the needs of individual students. The goals view socialization and self-actualization as complementary processes.[1]

The student participation committee investigated student involvement on four levels:

1. Student Participation on the Local Level

In order to determine the effect of student participation relative to the school climate, the student participation committee visited a number of schools, assessed problems within the schools and interviewed students, faculty members and administrators. There appears to be a relationship between the amount of student participation and the inherent problems of the school community. We feel that if all schools would make a greater effort to involve students in all facets of education, those problems may be significantly reduced.

Recommendation: We recommend that the State Department of Education encourage districts to implement the following committees:

a. Guidance Department - A student committee could aid with peer counseling.

b. Student-Faculty Committee - This committee could work in an investigative and mediation capacity in student/teacher grievances.

c. Principal's Advisory Committee - A student committee could work to improve student-administration relationships in schools by transmitting concerns of students to the principal and the concerns of the principal to the students.

d. Disciplinary Committee - This committee, consisting of students, teachers and administrators, would work as a mediator in cases where disciplinary action is requested or called for.

e. Student-Community Activities - This committee would work to improve the attitudes between schools and their

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[1] Report of the Citizens Commission on Basic Education, November 1973, p. 23.

communities; for example, involving senior citizens in school activities.

f. Committee on Student Rights and Responsibilities - This committee would be formed to aid in implementing the student rights and responsibilities in the school.

2. Student Participation on Local School Boards

The local school board determines district policy on many matters of student concern. Therefore, the student participation committee decided to explore the possibility of placing a nonvoting student member on local school boards in the Commonwealth. To accomplish this the committee requested that Student Advisory Board members obtain information relating to student representation on local school boards within their intermediate units. Information from other states revealed that California and Vermont both encourage student participation on local school boards. California reported that over 80 local boards have student members.

In Pennsylvania the Lower Dauphin School District recognizes two nonvoting student members on its board. A meeting with the superintendent, two Lower Dauphin board members and one nonvoting student member of the board proved valuable in the development of this committee's final recommendation. (See attachment A for details of the Lower Dauphin plan.) Some comments from the interview:

Superintendent: The student nonvoting member, looking from a youth perspective, could base decisions for the benefit of all.

Student member: We have created a student link to the school board. As members we examine reasons, evidence and backing for proposals, receive all board materials and maintain the attention of fellow board members. We feel that we act as ombudsmen.

School board member: The student members have helped to create better and more informed decisions. We couldn't get along without them.

As a result of the preceding study, we recommend:

The Pennsylvania State Board of Education suggests to each local school board that it include at least one nonvoting student member who would participate in the origin, research, discussion and implementation steps of the decision-making process and who would serve as a student

representative providing input to the board on a youth perspective, not as a representative supporting the views of the student population.

3. Student Participation on the State Board of Education

The State Board of Education adopts policies and regulations governing the educational programs of the Commonwealth. This being the case, the student participation committee felt student participation on this board warranted investigation. In the process of this investigation, the student participation committee spoke with several board members, reviewed similar student involvement programs in other states, examined previous programs in Pennsylvania and finally observed a meeting of the Council of Basic Education. On the basis of this investigation, we feel, the State Board of Education could benefit from periodic student input. The formal appointment of a student representative to the State Board of Education does not seem feasible, however, because of the demands, both time and background, required of the position. We feel that the State Board of Education should draw on the resources of the Student Advisory Board prior to acting on issues where student input could be helpful.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the State Board of Education increase its use of students, drawn from the Student Advisory Board, as resource personnel on topics where their opinions would be relevant.

4. Student Participation at the State Department Level

a. Permanent Student Advisory Board

In the three years of its existence, the Student Advisory Board has investigated ideas for the improvement of education in the Commonwealth. For example, the first board felt that the creation of a policy concerning student rights and responsibilities was necessary. Acting on this recommendation, the second board developed a formal document on student rights and responsibilities and later provided testimony for its acceptance. On September 28, 1974, the student rights and responsibilities regulations went into effect. Every year the board submits a report to the Secretary of Education on topics of student concern, including recommendations on their findings. These recommendations are designed to be presented to the State Board of Education or other applicable groups for consideration. Most importantly, the student board provides a link between the individual student and the Commonwealth.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the State Board of Education require each incoming Secretary to make clear his/her position on the active use of students in an advisory capacity, specifically the Student Advisory Board, to the State Board of Education, upon his/her appointment.

b. Office of Student Activities

Throughout the year students in the Commonwealth have questions about their education. The student participation committee felt that an office of student activities could fulfill these needs by acting as a clearinghouse for information on student records, student rights and responsibilities regulations and speakers on student activities. This office could publish and distribute materials written by students (by SAB committees, for example) and would maintain liaison with other statewide student groups, such as the PASC, PYEA and the Governor's Youth Traffic Safety Council. It would coordinate the operations of the Student Advisory Board and maintain a system for surveying student opinion when requested by PDE officials.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the Secretary of Education create an office of student activities to serve as a clearinghouse for student concerns.

Attachment A

## Lower Dauphin School District

## Position Description: Associate Student School Board Representative

PURPOSES:

To work constructively with the members of the Lower Dauphin School Board and District Superintendent in the development of policy statements which specify what the Lower Dauphin Schools should try to accomplish and participate in policy evaluation to determine how efficiently they are executed.

PERFORMANCE RESPONSIBILITIES:

There is no more important work than serving as a member of a functioning board of school directors and there is no work which requires greater wisdom, more patience, more common sense and greater devotion to a cause. Student board members, therefore, should be among the most competent, unselfish and devoted members of the student school community.

a. Assume the role of associate student school board representative of all people within the community, not of a particular segment.

b. Become thoroughly knowledgeable about the district operational policies and functions of the board.

c. Be cognizant of the board as a policy-making rather than administrative body.

d. Act for the board only when authorized by the board to perform a specific task.

e. Be prepared to study all matters presented to the board in light of needs that exist rather than in light of preconceived notions.

f. Participate in discussions with individuals or groups and suggest that requests for action be referred to the appropriate administrator.

g. Refer complaints to the proper school authorities and abstain from individual counsel and action.

h. Serve in a constructive manner and refrain from criticizing the board or employes outside the board meetings.

i. Appraise the work of employes in relation to the existing policies of the board.

j. Be cognizant of the fact that democracy is effective only when all board members support the implementation of policy that has been approved by majority action at a public meeting.

TERMS OF OFFICE:

Appointment by the board of school directors of an associate student school board representative shall be for a period of one (1) year, July through June.

SALARY:

School board members are not eligible for financial reimbursement other than for approved expenses. Student board members shall be governed by regulation BBBE - Compensation of Expenses for School Board Members.

EVALUATION:

Student board member performance will be evaluated annually in accordance with the same procedures of self- and group appraisal adhered to by regular board members. In addition, student board members shall receive the grade of "A" under independent study, equivalent to one full unit in the area of social science, under the title "Local Government Studies."

## Teacher Observation/Evaluation

### Background

1973-74 Committee:

During the first meeting of the Student Advisory Board on October 19 and 20, 1973, the tenure-teacher evaluation committee was formed to the belief that teacher observation/evaluation, as it stands now, is not extensive enough to provide the valuable insights that students can give their teachers. We felt we could help teachers by using an observation questionnaire and by showing them, through the students' eyes, their positive and negative teaching methods.

At first we had an interest in the tenure system, but we found that both evaluation and tenure were too involved to study simultaneously. We did not feel we were qualified to suggest revision of, or an alternative to, the tenure system, so tenure was dropped from consideration and the committee concentrated solely on teacher observation/evaluation.

Initially members of the committee obtained questionnaires where they were available and used in Pennsylvania and elsewhere in the nation and discussed their contents with teachers and administrators in their own schools. Then, at the March 1974 Student Advisory Board meeting, after the committee had framed a draft questionnaire, they invited representatives from the Pennsylvania State Education Association to discuss their intentions concerning the observation/evaluation questionnaire and asked that PSEA endorse it so that pilot testing of the observation questionnaire could be facilitated.

The PSEA staff members suggested that the committee give a report to the Instructional and Professional Development Council of the PSEA, which met in Harrisburg on April 19 and 20, 1974. Judy Nolley attended the meeting and reported on how the questionnaire might be distributed and collected, the rationale for the rating scale and the degree of specificity of the questionnaire.

1974-75 Committee:

During the first meeting of the 1974-75 Student Advisory Board, a committee was formed to carry out the recommendations by the 1973-74 teacher observation/evaluation committee. The services of a research associate from the Division of Research, PDE, were enlisted to develop and implement procedures for the pilot testing of the Student Observation of Teachers and Teaching Techniques form.

The existing SOTTT form was distributed to student forum members from three school districts in their respective intermediate units. These forum members conducted pilot testing programs to evaluate the content of the form for its clarity and validity. The pilot test was conducted in 10th, 11th and 12th grades. The resulting comments were compiled and statements on the forms were reviewed. The wording in several statements was simplified to insure a complete understanding of the statement. One statement concerning "cheating in the classroom" was deleted because of the students' negative reaction.

The revised statements on the form were separated into five categories--teacher-student relations, grades and testing, materials, teacher personality and teaching methods and techniques. A categorized tabulation sheet was formulated with an accompanying profile sheet. These two devices would allow teachers to record and graph results of an actual observation so they might easily see their strengths or weaknesses.

The revised SOTTT form was taken back to the committee members' high schools and those high schools in their respective IUs which agreed to allow a pilot test. Two copies of the results of the actual observation were made. One was given to the participating teacher for his/her own improvement; the other was returned to the teacher observation/evaluation committee in Harrisburg for an evaluation of the credibility of the questionnaire.

Methods used for validation of the instrument:

1. One teacher was observed by the same class on two different dates, with a three-week interval between observations. When this method was used, it was important that students were numbered or identified in some other manner. Students were then recorded in the same place on the tally sheet for each observation, i.e., John Doe is listed as student number 1 on both tally sheets. Also, until the second observation had taken place, teachers were not permitted to see their results from the first observation.

   This method was used to establish the teacher's confidence by showing a student's consistency and stability in using the form over a period of time.

2. One teacher was observed by two different classes in the same subject area. Again the teacher was not shown the results of the first observation until the second had taken place. Use of this method showed whether or not a teacher projects the same image to different classes.

3. Two teachers were observed by the same students (not necessarily a full class due to conflicts in schedules). Again students were identified in some manner and their observations were recorded in the same place on the tally sheets.

   This method was used to show whether students would take the observation seriously and make different comments concerning different teachers.

Preliminary analyses of the teacher tally sheet indicates that the same class tended to rate a teacher similarly on two separate occasions. This is a highly important result, since in order for teachers to take seriously the ratings of their students, they must be convinced that there is some stability in the ratings. For example, they must be convinced that a class will not give them high ratings today and low ratings tomorrow.

The student observation of teachers questionnaire appears to show differences among teachers. This is also an important result since, if it were found that a class gave the same ratings to each teacher rated, this would provide little information to any teacher.

It would be valuable for more extensive field testing by the Division of Research, Bureau of Information Systems, Pennsylvania Department of Education, before it is implemented extensively in the school districts of the Commonwealth.

Recommendations

The high school students in Pennsylvania should have the opportunity to provide constructive input to their teachers concerning their teaching techniques and professional relationship to students. This recommendation is made in order that students may help their teachers improve the quality of their teaching and to determine the effectiveness of classroom instruction. This observation form represents one type of instrument useful to gather such information. It is our intention that the results from any observation form be used solely to help the teacher gain knowledge of his or her strengths and weaknesses and not to be used by the administration to determine teacher ratings. The observation forms should be anonymous, with the findings known only to the individual teacher. After the collection of the tabulated observation forms, each teacher would be responsible for assuring that the results remain confidential.

With this in mind, we recommend that the SOTTT form, as it appears in this report, be made available to high school students and teachers throughout the Commonwealth. We feel the observation

should be optional for the teacher using it, but that each high school principal annually remind and encourage each teacher to use it. A procedural manual and forms should be available to the school districts throughout the Commonwealth (copy of procedural manual attached to report).

Most teachers want to improve themselves; therefore, there is no need to mandate the use of an observation instrument. Teachers will not feel pressured and resentful toward an optional observation form and will be more openminded about the results.

We recommend that teachers complete a self-assessment before the students observe them and then compare the results. This would give the teachers a chance to see if they are effective in the areas they think they are.

We also recommend that the observation/evaluation be done twice or more a year in order to illustrate to the teacher his or her improvement through the second half of the year on the second observation and to allow teachers of quarter or mini-courses to be observed and evaluated.

One of the most important facets of the observation/evaluation technique is the follow-up procedure. We trust that teachers who use the observation form will seek in-service training programs specifically geared to the areas in which the results indicate they need improvement.

We recommend that the observation form which follows be used as is, or as a guide in developing one that is more appropriate for each school district. If a school district decides to adopt its own observation/evaluation form, it is recommended that students be involved in the creation of the instrument. Districts may wish to adopt the basic model for use in special education or other classes in which circumstances dictate modification.

Date_____
Grade_____
Subject_____
Period_____

## Student Observation of Teachers and Teaching Techniques

The purpose of this teacher observation questionnaire is to help the teachers by enabling them to see their strengths and weaknesses through the eyes of their students. These questions were developed with this purpose in mind. Please answer these questions honestly and fairly with the thought that this observation questionnaire will in the long run help you, the student, as well as the teacher.

Directions: Please answer each question by circling the number that best describes your teacher. Upon completion of this questionnaire please follow the directions given to you by your teacher.

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The teacher is willing to help you when you need it. | 5 Always | 4 | | 3 Sometimes | 2 | | 1 Never |
| 2. The teacher creates an atmosphere which is: | 5 Just right | 4 | | 3 Somewhat too tense or too relaxed | 2 | | 1 Too tense or too relaxed |
| 3. The teacher is respected by you. | 5 Always | 4 | | 3 Sometimes | 2 | | 1 Never |
| 4. The teacher willingly accepts constructive criticism from students. | 5 Always | 4 | | 3 Sometimes | 2 | | 1 Never |
| 5. The teacher values student opinions. | 5 Always | 4 | | 3 Sometimes | 2 | | 1 Never |
| 6. The teacher is fair and impartial in dealing with all students. | 5 Always | 4 | | 3 Sometimes | 2 | | 1 Never |
| 7. It was clear how grades would be determined. | 5 Absolutely clear | 4 | | 3 Somewhat clear | 2 | | 1 Unclear |
| 8. The tests are returned without excessive delay. | 5 Always | 4 | | 3 Sometimes | 2 | | 1 Never |
| 9. The material on tests had been covered by the teacher prior to the test. | 5 Thoroughly | 4 | | 3 Moderately | 2 | | 1 Not at all |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10. | The teacher gives adequate time to complete tests. | 5 Always | 4 | 3 Sometimes | 2 1 Never |
| 11. | The tests measure your understanding of the main ideas of the course. | 5 Always | 4 | 3 Sometimes | 2 1 Never |
| 12. | Tests are explained after having been graded. | 5 Always | 4 | 3 Sometimes | 2 1 Never |
| 13. | Audio-visual aids are on your level of understanding. | 5 Understandable | 4 | 3 Somewhat difficult | 2 1 Difficult |
| 14. | If textbook is used, it provides a good understanding of the course. | 5 Outstanding in value | 4 | 3 Confusing | 2 1 Outdated & irrelevant |
| 15. | Textbooks are on your level of understanding. | 5 Understandable | 4 | 3 Somewhat difficult | 2 1 Difficult |
| 16. | The teacher is enthusiastic about the subject being taught. | 5 Always | 4 | 3 Sometimes | 2 1 Never |
| 17. | The teacher is patient. | 5 Always | 4 | 3 Sometimes | 2 1 Never |
| 18. | The teacher is cheerful. | 5 Always | 4 | 3 Sometimes | 2 1 Never |
| 19. | Discussions are a meaningful part of this course. | 5 Always | 4 | 3 Sometimes | 2 1 Never |
| 20. | Lectures are a meaningful part of this course. | 5 Always | 4 | 3 Sometimes | 2 1 Never |
| 21. | The teacher stimulates discussions. | 5 Always | 4 | 3 Sometimes | 2 1 Never |
| 22. | The materials of the course are presented in a manner that is easily understood. | 5 Always | 4 | 3 Sometimes | 2 1 Never |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 23. The teacher varies manner of instruction. | 5 Often | 4 | 3 Sometimes | 2 | 1 Seldom |
| 24. The teacher remains on one subject area until most students understand it. | 5 Always | 4 | 3 Sometimes | 2 | 1 Never |
| 25. Class presentation is well organized. | 5 Very well | 4 | 3 Moderately organized | 2 | 1 Totally unorganized |
| 26. Class management and discipline is sufficient to avoid disruption of the learning process. | 5 Always | 4 | 3 Sometimes | 2 | 1 Never |
| 27. Teacher comes to class well prepared. | 5 Always | 4 | 3 Sometimes | 2 | 1 Never |
| 28. The amount of time the teacher expects you to devote to his/her class: | 5 Just right | 4 | 3 Sometimes too much or too little | 2 | 1 Always too much or too little |
| 29. The homework assignments are helpful in understanding the course. | 5 Always | 4 | 3 Sometimes | 2 | 1 Never |

30. Does the teacher have any personal mannerisms that are distracting?

Yes No If yes, explain _____

31. Would you recommend this course to another student?

5 Definitely 4 3 Perhaps 2 1 No

32. I took this course because:

1. I wanted to take it.
2. I needed it to graduate.
3. I needed it for college.
4. Other - explain:

_____

_____

32. If there are any comments you would like to make, please include them below.

Thank you for your help and for answering each question honestly and completely. Any suggestions for improvement of this questionnaire may be listed below.

35

TEACHER TALLY SHEET FOR STUDENT OBSERVATION OF TEACHERS FORM

Teacher_____ Grade_____ Subject_____ Period_____ Date_____

Items of Student Observation of Teachers Form

| Students | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Teacher-Student Relations | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | Grades and Testing | 13 | 14 | 15 | Materials | 16 | 17 | 18 | Teacher Personality | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | Teach. Methods & Techniques |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 11 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 12 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 13 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 14 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 16 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 17 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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# TEACHER TALLY SHEET FOR STUDENT OBSERVATION OF TEACHER FORM

## Items of Student Observation of Teachers Form

| Students | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Teacher-Student Relations | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | Grades and Testing | 13 | 14 | 15 | Materials | 16 | 17 | 18 | Teacher Personality | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | Teach. Methods & Techniques |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 19 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 20 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 21 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| 24 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 25 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 26 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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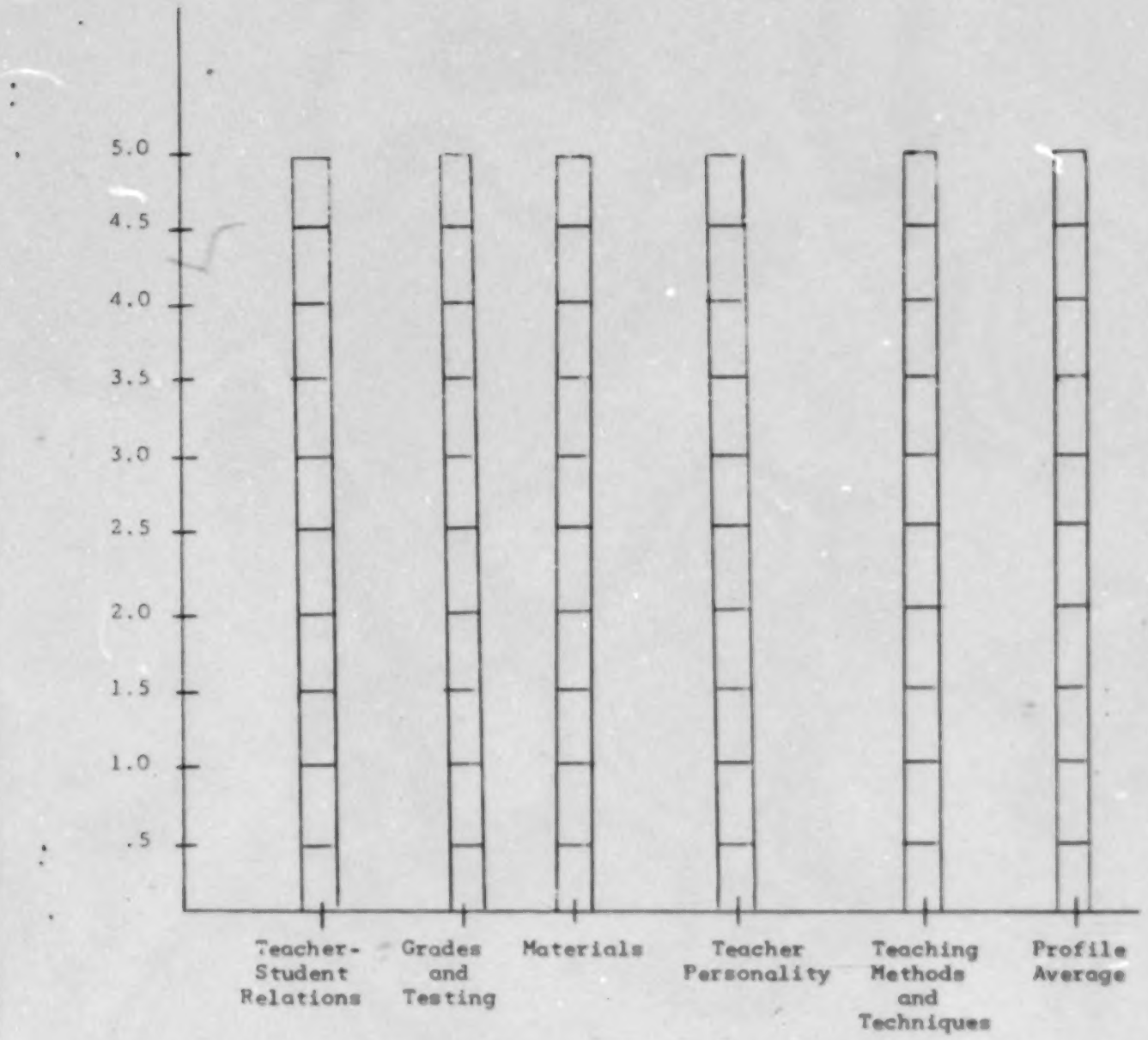
TEACHER PROFILE SHEET FOR STUDENT OBSERVATION OF TEACHERS FORM

Teacher_____ Grade_____ Subject_____ Period_____ Date_____



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